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STEVENAGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORTS

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH


and the

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

FOR THE YEAR 1958

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STEVENAGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS 1958

Medical Officer of Health and Divisional M.O.
for North Herts area:

V.R. WALKER, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.

Chief Public Health Inspector
and Housing Officer:

R.V. LAMEY, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspectors;

A.E. Flintoff, A.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

P. Hodges, A.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I. (Commenced 1.4.58)

Offices:

Medical Officer of Health:

Divisional Health Office, 12 Brand Street, Hitchin.

Tel: 3757.

Chief Public Health Inspector:

10 High Street, Stevenage.

Tel: 436-7-8.

STEVENAGE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

1958

To the Chairman and Members of the Stevenage
Urban District Council.

I present the above report prepared in accordance with the
directions of Ministry of Health Circular 22/58.

SECTION A

LOCAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres)	5,895
Home Population - Mid 1958 (Registrar General's Estimate)..	30,140
Number of habitable houses at 31.12.58.	9,950
Rateable Value at 31.12.58.	£460,625
Estimated product of a Penny Rate (1958/59)	£1,810

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR
THE YEAR 1958

	<u>STEVENAGE URBAN DISTRICT</u>	<u>Comparable Rate for England & Wales.</u>		
<u>LIVE BIRTHS</u>				
	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	
Legitimate	885	436	449	
Illegitimate	21	11	10	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	906	447	459	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	30.1	16.4		
<u>STILL BIRTHS</u>				
	<u>Totals</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	
Legitimate	16	5	11	
Illegitimate	-	-	-	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	16	5	11	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births..	17.3	21.6		

TOTAL LIVE & STILL BIRTHS

<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
922	452	470

DEATHS

<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
156	82	74

Rate per 1,000 of the estimated
resident population 5.2 11.7

INFANT DEATHS

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Under 4 weeks	9	2	7
Over 4 weeks under 1 year.	3	2	1
	12	4	8

Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (total) ...	13.2	22.5
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (legitimate) ...	13.6	
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births (illegitimate) ...	Nil	
Neo Natal (first 4 weeks Mortality rate per 1,000 live births ...	9.9	16.2
Illegitimate live births per cent of total live births ...	2.3%	
No. of maternal deaths (incl. abortion)	Nil	
Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live and still births ...	Nil	0.43

Deaths from Cancer (all sites) ...	26
Deaths from Measles ...	None
Deaths from Whooping Cough ...	None
Deaths from other infective and parasitic diseases ...	1

Comment on Vital Statistics

With the total of live births for the year still nearly six times the local figure of registered deaths, Stevenage is again shown a very young town. At 5.2 the local death rate is far below the national rate of 11.7 reflecting the much younger-than-average distribution of new population, and the Comparability Factor of 2.14 supplied by the Registrar General produces a 'standardised' death rate of only 10.9.

A less disquieting local figure is the return of 5 deaths (all male) among residents caused by motor vehicle accidents, compared with 8 (all male) for 1957.

The estimated mid-year population for 1958 of 30,140 (an increase of 3,580) is already out of date through continued inward migration.

The local stillbirth and infant mortality rates continued to fall well below the national figures, indicating a very favourable local family environment. Not a single death was recorded from any form of tuberculosis, while new notifications were markedly reduced.

The following table shows the main local vital statistics over the ten years 1949 - 1958:-

		<u>Birth Rate</u>	<u>Death Rate</u>	<u>Infant Mort. Rate.</u>
1958	...	30.1	5.2	13.2
1957	...	31.1	5.3	18.4
1956	...	30.8	5.4	17.7
1955	...	28.4	6.0	11.6
1954	...	29.1	6.8	12
1953	...	24.8	7.7	29
1952	...	20.8	7.7	6
1951	...	18.4	10.4	16
1950	...	14.0	10.5	-
1949	...	16.9	13.1	18

SECTION B

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

These are unchanged.

SECTIONS C to E

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA & INSPECTION & SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Full reports on the above are contained in the attached report of your Chief Public Health Inspector.

SECTION F

Prevalence of, and Control, over Infectious & Other Diseases

For the year 1958 total notifications of acute infectious diseases (after correction) were: Measles 467; Scarlet fever 64; Acute pneumonia 11; Whooping cough 5; Meningococcal infection 2; Erysipelas 1; Puerperal pyrexia 2 and Food poisoning 2.

Measles had its highest incidence in the second quarter but was (surprisingly) spread over the year, probably due to the very high proportion of young children in the population; there was no report of severe or complicated illness.

Similarly Scarlet fever cases were spread through the year, with the highest incidence in the second quarter; again cases were reported mild and uncomplicated. As nearly two thirds of such cases were under school age, school attendance cannot be held responsible for spread, which must rather be due to a widespread presence of a throat streptococcus of low virulence in the whole population.

Acute pneumonia cases had their main incidence in the first and last months of the year. Similarly two sporadic cases of Meningococcal Meningitis (in infants - non-fatal) had their incidence in winter months, one in January and one in December.

The two notified cases of Food poisoning (both of school age) in the third quarter had different infecting organisms (one *Salmonella Aertrycke* and one *Salmonella Newport*) but investigation failed to connect with any particular food or with other geographical area.

Notification of Whooping cough, as compared with measles has in the last few years become remarkably infrequent, suggesting such illness is now reduced in severity to a marked degree. Although it is far reaching to claim such reduction to be wholly due to the recent adoption of vaccination of infants against pertussis the measure continues to be popularly accepted and valued by mothers. Also, although immunisation procedures against both diphtheria and whooping cough have tended to be overshadowed by the recently introduced vaccination against poliomyelitis, there would seem no marked falling-off in acceptance by mothers of infant age children. All three separate immunisation measures continue available from both local authority centres and from family doctors.

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Deaths during the year 1958.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Resp.		Non-Resp.		Resp.		Non-Resp.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0 - 1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 - 5	-	1 (1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	- (1)	- (1)	(1)	-	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	- (5)	1 (5)	-	1	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	2(19)	3(18)	-(1)	-	-	-	-	-
35 - 45	- (4)	- (5)	-	-	-	-	-	-
45 - 55	-	- (1)	-	-	-	-	-	-
55 - 65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
65 & over	-	-	-(1)	-	-	-	-	-
Not known	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	3+(29)*	5+(31)*	-(3)*	1	-	-	-	-

* Figures in brackets indicate inward transfers.

Comment: New notifications of tuberculosis received during the year showed a marked reduction in the figures for the year 1957, numbering 8 respiratory against 16 in the previous year and 1 non-respiratory (against a previous total of 3).

In addition there is again recorded a considerable number of inward transfers (63 in all) - chiefly persons mainly at a quiescent stage of disease

seeking a specially favourable environment for a quiet and well regulated life.

No local death from any form of tuberculosis was registered during the year against the figure of 2 for the year 1957.

In conclusion, I would acknowledge having received every help during the year from your chief officers; particularly I would acknowledge the most valuable assistance from your Chief Public Health Inspector, Mr. R.V. Lamey, who is responsible for the compilation of the Sanitary sections of this report.

Your obedient Servant,

V.R. Walker.

District Medical Officer of Health.

June 1959.

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

for the year

1958

To the Chairman and Members of the Stevenage
Urban District Council.

I have pleasure in presenting my report for the year ending
31st December, 1958.

SECTION C

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

i) Water Supply

The water undertaking is now vested in the Stevenage Development Corporation. The supply is obtained from boreholes Nos. 1 and 2 at Whitehall Pumping Station from which about 1¾ million gallons per day are obtained - the station is capable of supplying some 3.7 million gallons/day when this is required by future development.

Two storage reservoirs each of 2 million gallons capacity and a high level water tower having ½ million gallon capacity have been constructed at Pinn Green, an area some 4 miles distant from the pumping station. The water tower is not yet in use except as a supply to some isolated cottages.

A reserve of about ½ million galls/day is available at Broomin Green borehole. This supply would require special chlorination before it could be used for drinking purposes as it is subject to periodic contamination. At the present time it is used only for research purposes by the Water Pollution laboratories of the Department of Scientific & Industrial Research.

The water supply is regularly sampled, and during the year I submitted 129 samples to the Public Health Laboratory Service at Luton for bacteriological examination; all of which proved satisfactory.

An adequate supply of water throughout the area is being maintained.

ii) Sewage Disposal

The Council's sewage disposal works which had dealt with part of the town's foul water drainage, was closed by the Council on the 31st March, 1958. All foul water now drains to the Ryemead Sewage works at Hertford. The filter beds, filtration plant and pumps have been removed from the site and it is expected that the area will be levelled and seeded.

Since the works have closed no complaints of smell and fly nuisance have been received from residents living nearby.

iii) Refuse Collection

The Public Cleansing Services are controlled by the Council's Surveyor. No tipping is carried out in the town; all refuse is transported some 11 miles away to a site at Waterford near Hertford.

The Council operates a Waste Paper Collection Service.

iv) Knackers Yard

There is one licensed knackers yard in the town. This is of model design and is maintained in a satisfactory condition. The premises are regularly inspected.

v) Rodent Control

Complaints of rat and mice infestation show a small increase over the previous year, and whilst it is true to say that Rodent Control causes few problems, and at present is managed quite adequately with the services of a part-time Rodent Operator, it is nevertheless advisable to deal speedily and effectively with all complaints so as to prevent a build-up in what is at present a small rat population. Test baiting of sewers was carried out in accordance with Ministry requirements.

Details of Rodent Control work carried out during the year are as follows:-

Total inspections	...	...	1481
No. of infested properties found	..		238
No. of infested properties treated			237
Complaints received	...	...	195

The infestations were classified as follows:-

Major infestation - Rats	...	...	Nil
Minor infestation - Rats	...	...	186
Minor infestation - Mice	...	...	54

vi) Petroleum Installations

45 licences for the storage of Petroleum and Petroleum Mixtures have been issued during the year. Five new petroleum stores and two underground installations have been constructed in an approved manner, and air pressure tests on tanks and fuel lines have proved satisfactory.

vii) SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA
ANALYSIS OF VISITS

Disinfestation	...	124
Drainage defects	...	95
Factories including canteens	...	171
Food Premises	...	791
Infectious Disease and Food Poisoning..		96
Knackers Yard	...	39
Moveable Dwellings	...	173
Mobile Vans and market stalls	...	157
Public Health & Housing Act Inspections (including revisits)		1207
School kitchens	...	23
Slaughterhouses	...	639
Miscellaneous visits.	...	601

SECTION E

i) Inspection and Supervision of Food Premises

Some 21 new food shops have been opened during the year bringing the total for the district as a whole to 189. Plans of these premises were considered at the same time as application for Byelaw and Planning Approval was made, and as a result all these premises comply with the provisions of the Food & Drugs and Shops Act.

Self service shops and supermarkets are prominent in the new Town Centre, and open food is wrapped and displayed in refrigerated cabinets. Problems sometimes arise with pre-packed meats and meat products, and it has been necessary to insist on a rigid system of coding and daily examination of the meat.

Details of the food trades including those contained in the 7 supermarkets are as follows:-

Bakehouses	...	6
Bakers	...	13
Butchers	...	23
Cafes	...	10
Canteens	...	31
Confectioners	...	21
Fishmongers	...	8
Greengrocers	...	22
Grocers	...	33
Guest Houses	...	7
Hotels	...	4
Licensed Premises		31

ii) Registration of Food Premises

(a) Food & Drugs Act 1955

Premises registered under Section 16 of this Act are as follows:-

Sale of Ice Cream	33
Sale of Preserved	
Food etc.,	24

(b) Milk and Dairies Regulations 1949/54

There are no registered dairies within the town. Licences have been granted to 12 dealers and 2 distributors in accordance with the provision of these Regulations.

iii) Inspection of Registered Food Premises

156 visits were made to premises registered for the sale of Ice Cream, and other registered premises were visited on 114 occasions. 53 visits were also made to those premises selling Ice Cream which are excluded from registration under the Food & Drugs Act.

iv) Disposal of Condemned Food

During the year, apart from meat condemned at the private slaughterhouses 15 cwts. 1 qr. 8 lbs. 15 ozs. of foodstuffs were condemned at various food premises in the town. All condemned food is stained with a naphthalene dye and removed from the food shops by the Council's Refuse Collection Service; strict control is exercised over its disposal.

v) Ice Cream Heat Treatment Regulations

A regular check is made of the many Ice Cream vendors operating within the town. There are no manufacturers of Ice Cream in Stevenage.

vi) Sampling

The following samples were taken during the year:

	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
Milk ...	129	-
Water ...	129	-
Ice Cream ...	159	3
Other Foods...	16	1

vii) Food Poisoning

In January 1958 over 20 persons employed at a factory within the town were affected with food poisoning, and as a result many were absent from work for several days. The outbreak was notified by the factory management and an investigation was immediately commenced. No notifications were received from private medical practitioners.

It was established that the only common food eaten by affected persons was corned beef rolls. Samples of some unused corned beef and the tin in which it was contained, together with specimens of faeces from affected persons were submitted to the Public Health Laboratories, Luton.

Bacteriological examination revealed the presence of Staphylococcus in the tin, and in the centre of the unused portion of corned beef, similar organisms were also detected in some of the specimens of faeces. Further examination showed that the organisms were of the same phage pattern, which belonged to a group associated with food poisoning.

The tin was later examined by the Research department of the Metal Box Co.Ltd., who reported that a leakage was detected through the soldered seam at one end of the can, and that as the tin showed no abnormal damage the indications were that the leakage was due to a fault in the soldering.

The manufacturers of the corned beef co-operated in the fullest possible manner during the investigation, and random sampling of stocks bearing a similar code number was carried out at their London warehouse. All samples proved satisfactory, and the corned beef was released for sale.

In January 1935 over 20 persons employed at a factory within the town were affected with food poisoning and as a result many were absent from work for several days. The outbreak was notified by the factory management and an investigation was immediately commenced. No notifications were received from private medical practitioners.

It was established that the only common food eaten by affected persons was corned beef rolls. Samples of some unopened corned beef and the tin in which it was contained, together with specimens of faeces from affected persons, were submitted to the Public Health Laboratory, Luton.

Bacteriological examination revealed the presence of *Staphylococcus* in the tin, and in the centre of the unopened portion of corned beef, similar organisms were also detected in some of the specimens of faeces. Further examination showed that the organisms were of the same type as those which belonged to a group associated with food poisoning.

The tin was later examined by the Research Department of the Metal Box Co. Ltd., who reported that a leakage was detected through the soldered seam at one end of the tin, and that as the tin showed no abnormal damage the indications were that the leakage was due to a fault in the soldering.

The manufacturer of the corned beef co-operated in the fullest possible manner during the investigation, and random sampling of stocks bearing a machine code number was carried out at their London warehouse. All samples proved satisfactory, and the corned beef was released for sale.